



## Community Involvement Plan

March 2001

This Community Involvement Plan identifies community concerns about the Hamilton/Labree Groundwater Contamination Superfund site. It also outlines opportunities for the public to become involved in future investigation and cleanup activities.

This plan was developed in consultation with members of the community, and can be updated at any time. We are sending it to fifteen stakeholders who have indicated an interest, and posting it on the EPA Region 10 webpage at <http://www.epa.gov/r10/earth>. If you have questions about the site, this plan, or would like additional information, please call, write, or e-mail:

Debra Packard  
Community Involvement Coordinator  
(206) 553-0247  
[packard.debra@epa.gov](mailto:packard.debra@epa.gov)

Sally Thomas  
Project Manager  
(206) 553-2102  
[thomas.sally@epa.gov](mailto:thomas.sally@epa.gov)

Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Sixth Avenue  
Seattle, Washington 98101

### **This plan contains, in the following order:**

- Current Community Concerns
- Community Involvement Activities
- Cleanup Activities: Background and Next Steps - Health Effects
- Site Description and Background
- What Is Superfund?
- Site Contacts
- Appendix : Notes from Community Interviews

EPA encourages meaningful community involvement. The goals of this plan are to:

- ☐ inform the public of planned and ongoing site activities
- ☐ maintain open communication about site cleanup, ensuring questions are answered and concerns and conflicts addressed as they occur
- ☐ provide interested parties with useful information
- ☐ provide citizens with opportunities to comment on and be involved in technical decisions
- ☐ encourage and assist local citizens in providing input to agency decisions that will have long-term effects on their community

## Current Community Concerns

In preparation for this community involvement plan, an announcement was mailed to approximately 260 people on our mailing list in August 2000. EPA invited individuals to participate in interviews with representatives of EPA. The interviews help EPA to understand community concerns and how residents would like to be involved in the cleanup process. Comments were gathered from the Lewis County Commissioners, the Lewis County Health Department, and several local residents. Comments from the Washington State Department of Health are also included in this document. (See Appendix for complete list of comments).

## Recommendations for Community Involvement

In general, people felt it was important for EPA to keep them regularly informed about health and environmental issues regarding this site,

including communicating sampling results. Opinions varied regarding methods to share this information. Suggestions included using public meetings, fact sheets, newsletters, phone calls and advertisements in the local newspaper. Respondents emphasized the need for accurate and complete information.

## Concerns about Contamination

Several respondents expressed **concerns** about the nature, extent, and possible health risks from the contamination. Some concerns focused on the possibility of perchloroethylene (PCE) being passed through the food chain, and the ongoing risks to human, animal, and environmental health. Requests for more information about the extent of the contaminated groundwater plume, the direction of groundwater flow, and timing of the cleanup process were also noted. EPA also received requests for information about the Superfund process, cleanup technologies, cleanup timeline, and cost.

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) worked with the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to prepare the following health consultations. To obtain a copy of any of these reports, call Paul Marchant at (360)236-3375.

December 23, 1996: "Hamilton Road PCE, Chehalis, Lewis County, Washington."

August 27, 1999: "Evaluation of Contaminants: Residential Domestic Well Near the Hamilton/Labree Road PCE Site."

June 6, 2000: "Volatile Organic Compounds in Well Water at the Lewis County Central Maintenance Shop, Chehalis, Lewis County, Washington." This study was done at a location 4.5 miles from the Hamilton/Labree site.

July 31, 2000: "Evaluation of Raw Dairy Cow Milk Samples, Lewis County Dairy Farm, Chehalis, Lewis County, Washington."

October 10, 2000: "Volatile Organic Compounds in Residential Drinking Water Supply Wells near Forest Napavine Road and Jackson Highway, Lewis County, Washington."

## Community Involvement Activities

EPA will continue to prepare and distribute information on site activities. Public officials and the press will be briefed as appropriate. Sampling results will be communicated to the public in fact sheets. EPA will hold public informational meetings as needed. This Community Involvement Plan will be updated and more information provided as necessary during the cleanup process.

### **EPA community involvement activities for this site include:**

- an information repository has been established to house site-related documents for convenient community review.
- a site mailing list has been generated and will be updated regularly.
- two fact sheets have been distributed: May 2000, August 2000.
- interviews were conducted in August 2000 to provide information for this Community Involvement Plan.
- a web page has been developed to keep citizens informed of site activities.

Listed below are some of the tools that EPA plans to use to keep the community informed and involved in the activities at the site. The level of community interest will be closely monitored and activities will be conducted as appropriate. This list can be updated at any time and EPA welcomes additional suggestions from community members.

### **Information Repository**

The purpose of an information repository is to make information accessible and available for public review. All technical documents and reports will be placed in the Information Repository located at the Chehalis Timberland Library, 76 N.E. Park Street, Chehalis, Washington 98532-0419.

## Fact Sheets

Fact sheets and other information materials summarizing site activities, technical documents, and reports will be mailed to EPA's Hamilton/Labree 260-person mailing list. Please call Debra Packard at (206) 553-0247 if you would like to be included on, or deleted from, this list.

## Public Meetings

If there is community interest, public meetings will be used to provide important site information, including sampling results. All public meetings will be announced in advance in future fact sheets and notices in the local media.

## Internet Website

A website on the Hamilton/Labree site activities is located at <http://www.epa.gov/r10earth>. Click on "Index," then click on "H"

## **Additional Community Involvement Activities, If Requested**

### **Technical Assistance Grants**

EPA will provide information on Technical Assistance Grants (TAGs) to all interested parties. A TAG provides funds to citizen groups that are affected by Superfund. Grant money is used to hire technical advisors to help interpret and explain technical materials produced as part of the Superfund process.

Grants up to \$50,000 are available, and require the group to match a local share contribution of 20% of total program cost. EPA recognizes the value of your group's skills and time. The TAG Program allows you to count the value of volunteer services and contributions of supplies toward the required 20% match. Donated office equipment and time, as well as cash, count towards this 20% match. Volunteer

services and donated supplies used toward your match are called "in-kind contributions." To receive more information about TAGs, please call Jeanne O'Dell, EPA Region 10 TAG Coordinator, at (206) 553-6919, or toll-free at 1-800-424-4372, extension 6919.

## **Workshops**

Informal workshops are not planned at this time. However, citizens may request a workshop on such topics as: Sampling Techniques, Potential Health and Environmental Risks Associated with the Site, and the Superfund Process.

## **Cleanup Activities: Background and Next Steps**

The Hamilton/Labree site was placed on the Superfund National Priorities List in July 2000. EPA's next steps will include sampling to characterize the contaminants and identify the extent of groundwater contamination. The sampling will also help us to discover more about groundwater flow in the area. The boundaries of the contaminated groundwater plume will be defined. EPA will use sampling results to identify different cleanup alternatives for the site. After carefully evaluating and comparing these potential cleanup alternatives, EPA will present a detailed proposal for cleanup. The community will have the opportunity to comment on EPA's proposal before a cleanup plan is finalized.

EPA conducted some sampling in the summer of 2000 to better characterize the contaminants and their extent. We expect to receive sampling results in early 2001 and will communicate them to the public in a fact sheet.

## **Health Effects from PCE**

The following information was provided by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). Perchloroethylene (PCE) belongs to a family of

chemicals known as "volatile organic compounds" which move easily through the environment and may be harmful to people who are exposed to them. Potential health problems from exposure depend on a variety of things, including how the chemical entered the body, how long and how often a person has been exposed, and how sensitive a person is to its effect.

At room temperature, PCE is a nonflammable liquid. It evaporates easily into the air and has a sharp, sweet odor. High concentrations of PCE (particularly in closed, poorly ventilated areas) can cause dizziness, headache, sleepiness, confusion, nausea, difficulty in speaking and walking, unconsciousness, and even death. The health effects of breathing in air or drinking water with low levels of PCE are not known.

### **Potential Threats to Human Health**

- Drinking water contamination
- Effects from vaporization ("volatilization") of contaminated water during uses like showering and cooking

## **Site Description and Background**

The Hamilton/Labree site is the area around the intersection of Hamilton and Labree Roads. It is located about three miles south of Chehalis, Washington, just west of Interstate 5. It is a mixed industrial and agricultural area with several businesses and private homes. In 1993, during testing for a commercial well application, perchloroethylene (PCE) was discovered in the groundwater. PCE is a chemical commonly used in metal degreasing and cleaning operations, dry cleaning, and other industrial uses. It has the potential to cause cancer in humans. This finding prompted the Lewis County Department of Health to ask the Washington Department of Health (DOH) to investigate ground water contamination in private and public supply wells in the area. DOH sampled in 1993-1994 and again in 1996, confirming PCE contamination. At this time, the county health department advised owners of the contaminated wells to use an alternate water

supply for drinking and cooking. The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) has notified all affected well users. Bottled water is being used at those properties.

From 1997 to 1999, Ecology led the investigation at the site. Additional sampling by Ecology and EPA has identified two discreet source areas for PCE. One source is an area that contained buried drums (removed in November 1999), northeast of the intersection of Hamilton and Labree roads. The other source is located between Hamilton Road and Interstate 5, southeast of the Hamilton/Labree intersection. The Hamilton/Labree site was placed on the Superfund National Priorities List in July 2000 and the EPA will now lead the environmental investigation. Additional investigations are underway at both source areas.

### What Is Superfund?

In 1980, Congress passed the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), which was amended in 1986 by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA). These two laws are commonly known as Superfund.

Superfund gives the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) authority to investigate and clean up releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances. The Superfund process is complex and can take many years to complete. On average, a site can stay on the National Priorities List (NPL) anywhere from six to ten years, and some sites are still on the list after 15-20 years.

If an immediate problem threatens public health or the environment, EPA also has the authority under Superfund to address the situation quickly through a removal action.

### Other General Superfund Information Available on the Internet

Superfund Program Acronym Glossary  
<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/gloss1.htm>

Glossaries of environmental terms  
<http://www.epa.gov/ocepa111/OCEPAterms/>  
<http://www.epa.gov/oerrpage/superfund/resources/hrstrain/htmain/glossal.htm>

Superfund Frequently Asked Questions  
[http://www.epa.gov/superfund/faqs/sf\\_faqs.htm](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/faqs/sf_faqs.htm)

### Site Contacts

EPA Staff

**Debra Packard**, Community Involvement Coordinator  
**Sally Thomas**, Project Manager

(206)553-0247

(206)553-2102

You may also call EPA toll-free at 1-800-424-4372

For Health Questions:

Washington State Department of Health

**Paul Marchant**

(360)236-3375

Lewis County Health Department

**Steve Garrett**

**Sue Kennedy**

(360)740-1233

## **Appendix:**

### **Notes from Community Interviews**

The following comments were gathered from meetings held in August 2000 with the Lewis County Commissioners, the Lewis County Health Department, and several local residents. EPA also spoke to the Washington State Department of Health.

### **Recommendations for Community Involvement**

One county commissioner said he used to receive regular phone calls from a staffperson at Ecology to update him on the site, and that this method worked for him.

Some people felt public meetings to share EPA's sampling results would be a good idea.

One person recommended newsletters as well as fact sheets, and suggested we number our fact sheets. Another person declined to set up an interview, but mentioned that EPA's fact sheets have been a useful method of information sharing.

One person recommended public workshops which would include good graphics and maps of the groundwater plume and wells. This would allow people to ask questions in a smaller group setting, if they preferred.

There was one comment that the local newspaper, the Centralia Chronicle, was the best way to get information to the local community.

One person described the community as small and conservative.

The Washington State Department of Health requested that EPA share fact sheets with them for comment before mailing out to larger mailing list, as they have been heavily involved in this site and can provide useful information.

### **Concerns about Contamination**

Concerns were voiced about PCE contamination in local wells. Some people had questions about how PCE is passed through the food chain.

Questions came up about whether the contaminated ground water plume is moving, and if so, in what direction.

A person wrote that they wanted to know more about the contaminants' possible effect on their property, which is near the site. Another person was concerned about the contaminants' potential effect on livestock.

One of the Lewis County Commissioners asked about which cleanup technology or combination of technologies EPA would use at this site. The commissioners also wanted an estimate of the cost of cleanup.

Several people asked EPA about the cleanup schedule and urged us to respond quickly. Some were frustrated with the cleanup process, which can move slowly.

Responding to EPA's question about possibly implementing a permanent alternate water supply for the site, people had questions and concerns about how long-term cost and maintenance would be funded.

One person wrote that they felt that the Potentially Responsible Party should pay for the cleanup before the taxpayers pay.

**Other issues were identified that are outside the scope of EPA's proposed cleanup project, but are included in order to capture all comments:**

The Lewis County Health Department mentioned that elevated levels of nitrates and tannins are present in wells. They also mentioned that "pit wells," which are not visible from the surface, may exist in the area and might have been used for disposal.

A concern was voiced that Lewis County has no pollution prevention program.

The Administrative Record, a file containing all information used to make decisions on response actions for the site, will be available at the following locations:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Seventh Floor Records Center  
1200 Sixth Avenue  
Seattle, Washington 98101

and

Chehalis Timberland Library  
76 N.E. Park Street  
Chehalis, Washington 98532-0419

EPA Region 10 Webpage: <http://www.epa.gov/r10earth>



United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

Region 10 (ECO-081)  
1200 Sixth Avenue  
Seattle WA 98101

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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN  
Hamilton/LaBree Groundwater Contamination  
Superfund Site  
Chehalis, Washington